MODERN TIMES

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Teachers Take Board to Court

by Matt Borenstein
Modern Times Staff

On April 9, the New Haven Federation of Teachers filed suit in Connecticut Superior Court for the restoration of jobs to 140 New Haven teachers who received termination notices on March 1. In another suit, the NHFT has accused the Board of Education of breach of contract in the reduction of the work week of 10 Head Start teachers.

State laws require that teachers who are layed off in this manner can request a public hearing. Over 100 of the teachers asked for a hearing, but were completely ignored by the New Haven Board of Education.

Unilateral Action

Superintendent Barbarito issued the termination letters without a vote by the Board of Education and without any consideration of specific educational needs and merit of the teachers involved. In addition, the Board has claimed that its proposed budget covers all positions presently paid for by city funds.

The NHFT has asked the courts for a speedy ruling on this issue because the teachers involved must know their job status for next year.

The breach of contract suit involves the jobs of 10 Head Start teachers. Head Start is a pre-school program run by the New Haven Board of Education. The teachers employed in this program are covered by the same contract that applies to all other public school teachers.

Blames Cutbacks

The Board of Education claims that cutbacks in state funding has forced the reduction in work week and eventual termination (May 1!!) of the Head Start teachers. The contract presently provides for 184 work days per year.

The NHFT has instructed the Head Start teachers to work the full week and will demand full pay for these teachers.

In the termination of the 140 teachers, the Board of Education has claimed it has done nothing illegal. Yet the law clearly states that public hearings must be held within 15 days of a request for them. According to the law, the Board should have held 100 public hearings by March 25. The teachers involved received no notification.

The Board claimed that it did not have to give the hearings because its attorney had been "negotiating" with the NHFT attorney. These negotiations had involved only one phone call.

Nick Heyer

New Haven teachers made their demands clear Tuesday, April 8, in a march from Lee H.S. to City Hall.

Strong Union - Key to End Lockout

by Nicholas Heyer
Modern Times Staff

On Monday, April 7, at a 7AM membership meeting, Local 243 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) overwhelmingly approved a new contract with Sargent and Co. Thus ended the only lockout in New Haven's recent memory.

The lockout started March 17 after the union rejected Sargent's "final" offer. "It was an immense shock to these workers " recalls Harry Kaplan, UE national representative, "when they showed up for work and couldn't get in. Even though I warned them, they couldn't believe it would happen."This is the first time a labor dispute resulted in a work stoppage at Sargents since 1951.

Anger Spurs Solidarity

Relatively good union-company relations had come to an abrupt end. Anger and a deep feeling that Sargents had done them wrong helped the union members maintain a strong solidarity against the company's power tactics. While Sargents claimed that this was a strike, the union won a moral and financial victory when State Labor Commissioner Santaguida ruled that at least initially the workers were locked out.

In recommending acceptance of the new contract, the negotiating team and Kaplan warned the UE workers that the hardest fights were yet to come. Sargent and Co. had been bought by the Walter Kidde Co. about eight years ago. Kidde is a multinational corporation and one of *the top 200 corporations in the U.S. Until recently, however, the old management had remained . This was the first contract negotiations with the new management.*

Company Attacks Contract

The Company brought in a professional negotiator, who, according to Kaplan, is a known "union buster" , and has been used by Kidde against other unions. The early contracts offered by the company had not only been monetarily unsatisfactory, but attacked contract provisions, built over the years, that protect workers' security. Only the solidarity of the UE members protected the strength of their contract.

Improvements in the new two year contract include : a wage increase of 50 to 65 cents per hour, a maximum cost of living adjustment of 12 cents, pension increases to a maximum of $245 per month, $7000 life insurance, increased sick pay to a maximum of $100 per week for 26 weeks, a prescription drug plan, and extended paid vacation to five weeks after 25 years.

Important considerations in contract language were the method of wage increases (which did not upset the incentive system favored by the union) , the exclusion of non union company employees from working on union jobs, and a non-discrimination clause covering age, race, sex, religion and national origin.

On the union's negotiation team were Madalyn Scillia (local 243 president), Stanley Pinski, Frank DiNicola , Larry Carboni, Bob Ford , Lucy Boomer, Toni Fasula, Anthony DeLucia and Marshall DiMartino

SPECIAL ISSUE

Dealing With Hard Times

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YaleCo-op Workers Union In!

Nick Heyer

Obstacles and delays out of the way, the new Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America local of Yale Coop employees held elections for its negotiating team. The union, voted in by Coop employees March 6, expects to get official recognition this month and start negotiating their first contract. Nick Aiello, business agent for a sister ACWA union, Local 125, congradulated the new union members. The negotiating team is Joanne Patton (clerical), Gail Hershatter (books, cashiers, gifts), Helen Migllore (Coop East, room furnishings), Joe Mulready (fashion floor), Lou Pellegrino (receiving, warehouse), and Sally Nista (part time employees).

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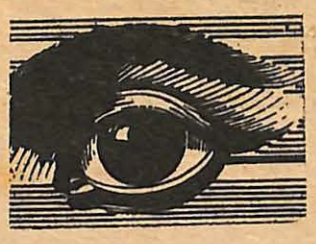


eye on the board

Board Won't Study Abandoned Housing

by Andrew J. Esposito
Modern Times Staff

The Board of Aldermen at its April meeting failed to tackle one of New Haven's most pressing problems: abandoned housing. After much debate, the Board voted to table a resolution presented by John Daniels(D-26) to set up a committee to study the problem. In fact, it was Daniels who made the motion to table his own proposal.

The motion to table was made after a confusing counter proposal was offered by Melvin Esdaile(D-23). He objected to setting up a new committee. Esdaile contended that the city's new Code Enforcement Commission would be the best agency to look into the problem. After a hurried conference between Esdaile, Daniels and Board president Vincent Mauro(D-3), Daniels made his motion to table. The motion was approved by a voice vote.

Backround Study Needed

Over the last three or four years abandoned housing has become a blight on the New Haven landscape. According to Daniels, the rate of abandonment has escalated to the point where there are now 400 deserted buildings in our city. The 25th Ward Alderman went on to attack the administration's response to the problem. They are "destroying bad and good buildings alike," he said.

While indicating the problem was complex and couldn't be solved over night, Daniels asked that the city "create a task force to study the problem and find solutions." He urged his colleagues to act immediately. They did not. It appears that no action on the problem will be taken by the Board until its May meeting.

The problem, as most observers realize, ismultidemensional. Unfortunately, as such, it leads to a certain amount of demagoguery. And the demagogue of the evening turned out to be Myers(D-27).

He saw the difficulty not as one of abandoned housing, but as one of vandalism. According to Myers, all that's needed to solve the problem is to jail the vandals. His approach totally ignores any attempt to find out why buildings are abandoned.

Not Our Fault

A third view was expressed by Michael Natalino (D-14). The East Side Alderman who owns buildings in the Hill, saw the state's flat grant proposal as the villain. Additionally, he lamented the fact that Federal regulations prohibit direct payments to landlords.

Natalino also resorted to demagoguery when he claimed remodeling homes wouldn't solve the problem. He speculated that newly renovated apartments would be wrecked by the people who live in them.

This type of attitude neatly avoids the problem. For it's too easy to find excuses for not making progress toward a solution. Even given the Federal restrictions, the city clearly can do something to solve the abandoned housing mess.

Backers Speak Out

Backing for Daniels' proposal came from James Jones (D-26), Frank Logue (D-18), and Rosalind Berman (R-29). Like Daniels, Berman decried the fact that more and more homes are being deserted. She told her colleagues that it is their "responsibility to reverse the trend'.' The 29th Ward Alderwoman put herself squarely behind the move to establish a study committee.

In his statement supporting a study group, Logue asked that it examine changes in the pattern of abandonment. He told the Board: "We should try to understand the problem, so we can prevent it." For example, Logue asked, Why does it take place?"

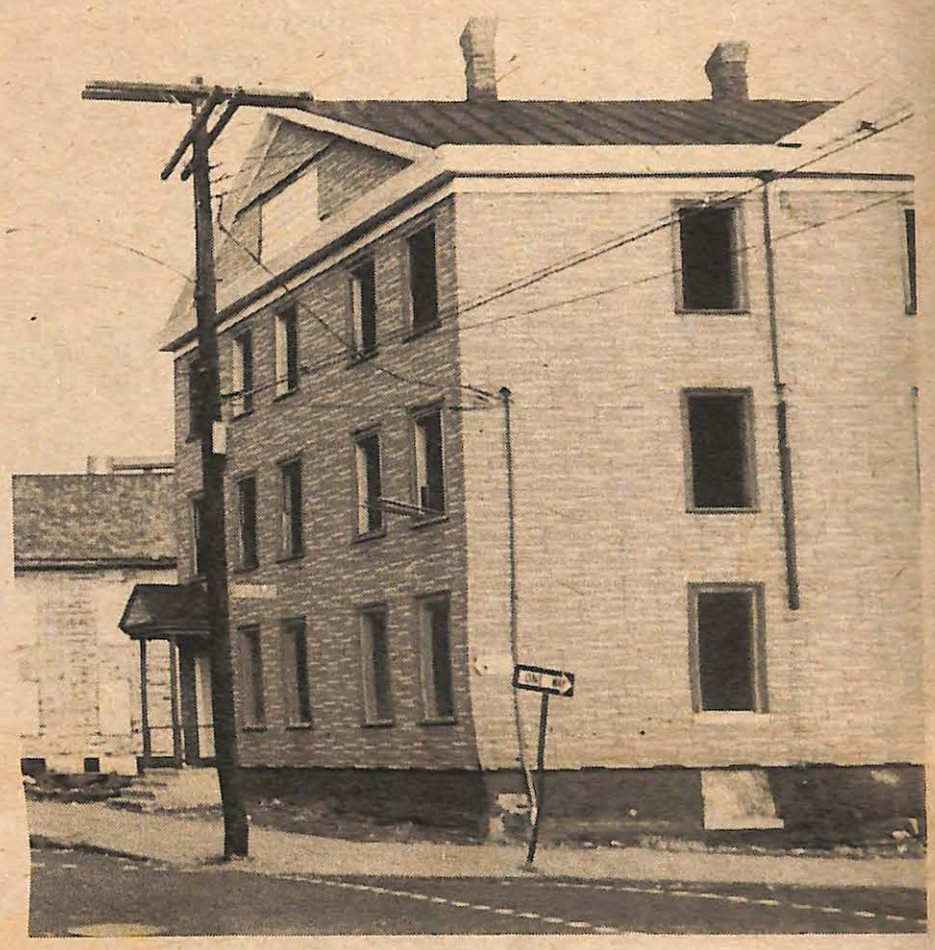
Another supporter, Jones, while expressing agreement with Myers about vandalism, asked that it not be confused with the intent of Daniels resolution. "We need," saidJones, "a study of the social and economic conditions"responsible for abandoned housing. "Therefore,"concluded Jones, "we need a study committee."

Type of Committee

The tabling of the resolution gives Daniels and other supporters of the committee, time to put together some solid legislation. They can write a resolution placing the abandoned housing problem on the agenda.

The study committee should be made responsible to the Board of Aldermen. True, the Board is not the perfect overseer agency. However, with 30 people involved , the chances are that the issue will not be buried, as might happen if city hall were the supervisory organ.

The aldermen have an opportunity to attack a pressing urbanpproblem. Let's hope they don't blow it!



Nick Heyer

Abandoned housing is a major problem in New Haven.

Abortion Row Reopens

by Ann Kilbride
Modern Times Staff

Recent furor against legalized abortions draws its strength from "Right to Life" groups who advocate that an unborn fetus is a real person, deserving full moral and legal protection.

This argument, originally proposed by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, succeeded in convicting (on February 17, 1975) Dr. Kenneth Edelin of manslaughter. Although Edelin performed a legal abortion in Boston City Hospital in 1973, he was accused of holding a 20 to 24 week-old fetus inside the mother's womb to guarantee its death. His actions were condemned by the jurors, who, upon seeing pictures of the fetus, argued that "it looks just like a human being."

Edelin's conviction has sparked a variety of responses and anti-abortion groups have accelerated their lobbying activities in Washington. Hospitals, accused of poor fetal care, have tightened regulations and procedures.

Dilemma Still Remains

In addition to the practical problems arising from these reactions, there remains the age-old dilemma: mother versus child. Until abortion was legalized, the fetus and the woman were simultaneously saved or lost. The doctor was forbidden to aid one at the expense of the other. Consequently, many women died needless deaths.

Of course, saving a human life--whether full grown or premature--is a commendable value. But, anti-abortion groups insist that women have no right to interfere with biology.

Loss of Personal Freedom

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of anti-abortion legislation is the loss of personal freedom. Since no one is forced to practice birth control, each individual is able to make a private, personal decision. Removing this freedom of choice eliminates the concept of democracy; in effect, the opposition would impose its will, its moral code, on everyone else.

If abortion laws are repealed or restricted, many women will suffer. As evident throughout history, abortions were always available for the very rich who had financial as well as political protection. The poor, however, faced imprisonment, fines, quack doctors and mutilating operations. To protect the life and freedom of all women, abortions should not only be legal, they should also be safe, hygenic and inexpensive.

New Haven Teachers March for Fair Shake

by Matt Borenstein
Modern Times Staff

About 100 teachers supported by representatives of other local unions marched from Lee High School to City Hall on Tuesday afternoon, April 8. The marchers chanted "Fair Wage, No Cuts, Quality Education," as they proceeded down Church Street.

The New Haven Federation of Teachers had called the march for Thursday, April 3, but heavy rains forced a postponement. The NHFT has been negotiating for a new contract with the Board of Education since December 18. In the face of threatened layoffs and cuts in educational expenditures, the teachers' union stressed its determination to press towards a just contract settlement for next year.

Board Ignores Teachers

On March 1, the Superindentent of Schools gave layoff notices to 140 first year teacher(see accompanying story on teacher layoff court action.) Later in the month, the Board of Education cut $400,000 from its proposal to the Board of Finance. At the same time, the Board of Education has not even come up with a proposal at the bargaining table.

While the NHFT has reduced its wage demands from 15% to 12%, the Board of Education still maintains that teachers are not worth any salary increase despite an over 39% inflation rate during the three year contact period.

The Board's threat and termination letters are considered stalling tactics by the NHFT. Over the last three contract negotiations, the union has had to settle its differences with the New Haven Board either in the courts or on the picket line.

Standstill Negotiations

The current contract expires on June 30 and negotiations are already at a standstill. Help was asked from the State Commissioner of Education but the NHFT officials have learned from past bitter experiences that negotiations will probably have to be brought to arbitration.

The Board of Education has unilaterally denied all NHFT requests for contract changes including a reduction in maximum class size to 25. Even though in the 1970 contract the Board of Education committed itself to work toward a maximum class size of 25, it has only agreed to a total reduction of1—from 33 to 32.

Kindergarten classes in the city (with aides)are often over the 32 limit even though the Board was supposed to "make special efforts" to keep class size at 31 in K-4 classes.

The March on City Hall was the beginning of a campaign by the NHFT to expose the anti-education policies of the New Haven Board of Education.

Bosses Attack Unemployment Fund

Modern Times Staff

As unemployment continues to steadily rise in Connecticut a major battle is shaping up in the General Assembly over the financing of the state unemployment insurance fund and current laws regarding benefits and disqualifications for claimants under the Unemployment Compensation (UC) statutes.

The combatants are organized labor and business-management groups. The outcome of the struggle in the state legislature will seriously effect the living standards of the nearly 130,000 Connecticut workers currently receiving benefits in addition to the thousands more who face lay-offs as the crisis deepens and spreads in the months ahead.

Fund in Trouble

The Connecticut UC Fund is in serious trouble. It has been bankrupt since 1972 when the state had to begin borrowing money from the federal government to meet its obligations to unemployed workers. This borrowing has increased the state deficit by $137 million to date. Another $60 million at least, will have to be borrowed this year, pushing the state's indebtedness to $200 million.

The continuation of unemployment compensation benefit payments and the preservation of existing state liberal statutes in regard to qualifications for UC depend in large part on the solvency of the insurance fund. The legislative programs advanced by both business and labor address themselves to reform of the financing structure of the fund. But there the similarity stops.

Alternate Proposals

Labor's legislative program to deal with the bankrupt Connecticut UC fund is far reaching in the scope of its reforms and in re-structuring the financing of the fund. It attempts to distribute, through state action, the unevenness of the economic crisis facing us by shifting some of the burden to those industries which have escaped severe shock and instability.

The program of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), however, is simply sham reform. Its real goal is the justification of reactionary legislation to further restrict the distribution of much-needed benefits.

Labor's Case

The United Labor Legislative Committee, a coalition of the Connecticut State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and the Connecticut United Auto Workers- Community Action Program Council (UAW-CAP) has called for reform legislation. The two areas which it has identified as the source of the fiscal crisis in the UC fund are the taxable wage base and the employer tax rate. The taxable wage base is the amount of employee wages which the employer is obligated to pay taxes on, and the tax rate determines what percentage each employer will pay on that wage base.

The current tax base in Connecticut is $4200. This means that employers pay no taxes on wages earned by their workers over this amount in any calendar year. This figure is much too low according to UAW and State Labor Council sources. The average Connecticut wage of workers covered under the UC laws was, in 1974, over $9400. The fund, accordingly, loses over half its tax potential.

Business Escapes Taxes

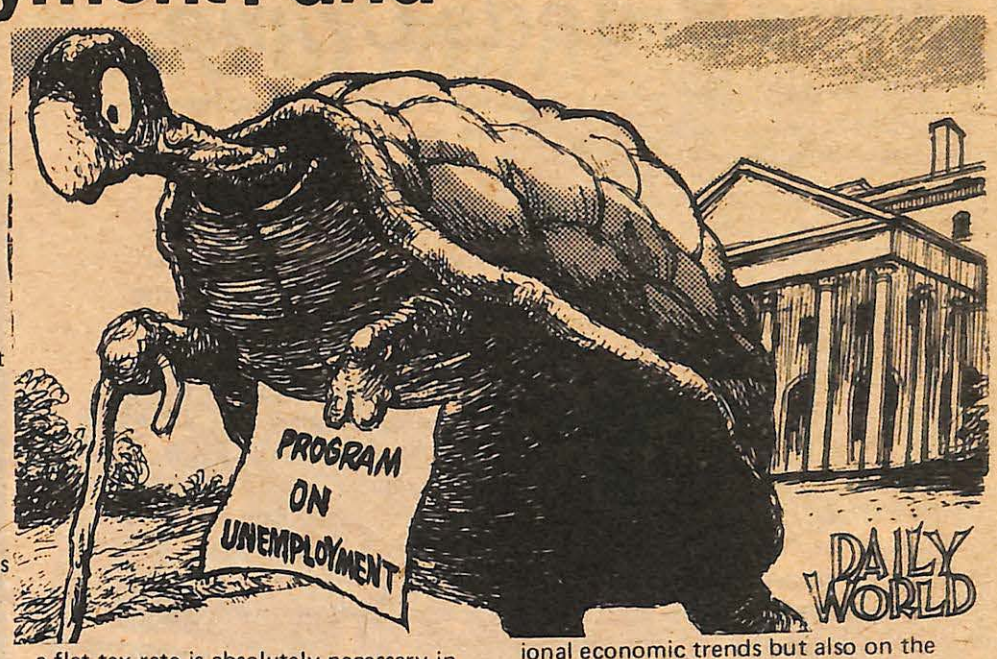
The unemployment tax base has increased by less than half of its 1940 rate of $3000 when it increased to $3600 in 1967 and to $4200 in 1970. This is true despite the eight fold rise in the average yearly wage of factory workers during the same period from $1298 to $10,060. In 1973 the total payroll of workers covered under the UC insurance act was $9.1 million, yet the taxable payroll for the fund was only $4.6 million.

Organized labor has suggested legislation (HB 6799) which would raise the taxable wage base to reflect the increased incomes of Connecticut workers. The taxable wage base would be set as a percentage (85%) of the average annual earning of all workers covered under the act.

For 1975, for example, the wage base would be approximately $7,800. With each rise in average income, the wage base would rise thereby increasing revenues to the fund. This step alone, would increase contributions by 80%.

Reform Tax Rate

H. B 6790 would repeal Connecticut's Benefit Ratio merit rating system which currently determines the percentage rate which each employer pays on the taxable wage base. Both the UAW and the CSLC argue that replacing the benefit ratio with



a flat tax rate is absolutely necessary in order to expedite the flow of revenues to the UC fund.

Under the current system there is a huge gap between the rate some Connecticut firms pay--such as banks, utility companies, and insurance firms with stable employment, and the rate paid by others, notable construction companies and manufacturing establishments where lay-offs are considerable.

This means that factories are contributing to the maximum rate of 5.9% and utilities at the minimum of 1.4%. Instituting a flat 3% tax will increase contributions insofar as the stable employers in the state (banks, utilities, insurance) will pay more into the fund then they now do.

Spread the Burden

Organized labor has argued against the high tax rate on those industries which are in chaos due to the economic crisis and are laying off thousands of workers. These rates increase the unevenness of the depression facing Connecticut by further depressing already troubled industries.

The UAW testified before the Labor and Industrial Relations Committee that "all of Connecticut business should shoulder this responsibility regardless of employment stability, because the health of Connecticut's economy is the obligation of all of the state's industrial, financial and service concerns.

The full employment of workers in Conn. industry depends not only on national economic trends but also on the money and interests rates available from the state's banks, the cost of industrial fuels and lighting and power purchased from local utilities, and the amount of investment capital which insurance companies use within the state. Each sector bears a responsibility for the economic decisions which effect the livelihood and standards of Connecticut's workers.

Company Solutions Hurt Workers

CBIA also has proposed legislation to deal with the funds deficit. Their bill calls for raising the wage base to $5,000 at the end of this year and then to $6,000 at the end of next year while maintaining the benefit ratio merit rating system. This front of reform only partially hides the clear anti-working class substance of their proposals.

CBIA's bill won't deal with the fiscal problems of the fund until next year and then only in a half-baked manner. In the meantime they tell legislators that the "crisis" calls for sacrifice by Connecticut's workers in the form of gutting the progressive aspects of the unemployment statutes.

CBIA's past inaction on UC is public record. In 1973 and 1974 they blocked all attempts by organized labor to try and restore the fiscal integrity of the fund, knowing full well that it was bankrupt. This was a deliberate design on CBIA's part to let the fund go broke and

see JOBLESS page 6

Human Services Committee in N.H.

Nick Heyer

The State Legislature's Human Services Committee came to New Haven Monday, March 31, to hear testimony on a wide variety of bills. Important welfare reform bills received a good deal of attention. They include SB 7376 which calls for an immediate 12% cost of living adjustment and SB 7262 which would provide for an ongoing 100% cost of living adjustment. A third bill providing emergency energy need funds had been favorably reported and since has been passed and signed.

Food Coop Beats Giants

Modern Times Staff

During the wage-price freeze of 1971, a group of New Haven people decided to do something about the high cost of food by starting a collective. The New Haven Food Co-op was initiated to cut the expenses of buying food from profit-making enterprises.

At first the co-op worked on prepaid orders which were received and distributed through many areas in the city. This worked for a while, but as the amount of people interested in joining the Co-op increased so did the need for a consolidated place of operation.

Finding a Home

At first a building on Carlisle St., in the Hill, was purchased, and from there a thousand or so families were served. About a year ago the New Haven Food Co-op moved to the old A&P building on Greenwich Ave. This provided more space to house the supplies needed by a growing number of households.

Each year the total number of member households increase, and this year is no different. From April of last year to April 1st of this year, the Co-op has grown from approximately 1600 households to between 2500 and 3000. This increase is due of course to the on-again-off-again recession that we have in this country.

Many Advantages

There are several advantages in belonging to the Co-op. The most significant one is the savings in the total cost of food. A household can save between 15 and 20% on its food bill. This is because the Co-op is a non-profit enterprise and relies heavily on the work of its members (each adult member is required to work one hour a month).

Another way the co-op saves members money is by marking up their products (to cover expenses) by only 8-10%, while the average markets mark up their products 12-45% depending on the item (for example, bread is marked up around 25%; meat about 30-35%; produce about 40-45%).

More than a Service

The Co-op is an organization of people dedicated to furthering themselves as people, rather than being merely a consumer service. In order for the Co-op to survive, it must rely on the involvement of its members. The founders expected people to get together to talk to each other in a working, buying, helping situation. The members take on the responsibility of the growth and development of the Co-op when they join.

The Co-op sees itself as an organization which both supplies needed products and educates people to the dangers of mass produced goods. The Co-op is based on cooperation.

Our health and needs are often lost in the profit making enterprises of supermarkets. In this period of recession and hard times, the New Haven Food Co-op and its members are making it a little easier to get by.

editorial

Crime Breeds Crime

Recent FBI statistics show that crime has increased in New Haven by 24% over last year. The area of crime with the largest increase is burgularies., where the figure is 80%. A direct correlation between these increases and the depressed economy can be made.

We believe that there are two criminals for every crime committed. One is the individual performing the act and the other is the criminal capitalist system that robs people of jobs, dignity, adequate food and decent health care and fosters the idea that happiness can be bought. In times of depression people react to being deprived of all they really need or are told they need, by taking the only individual course available: going out and taking for themselves. The people that they victimize are those that are easiest to rip off—the poor and the old.

Since societal conditions generate crime, changing the conditions is the only way crime can be stopped. For each criminal jailed, the tax payers must pay for his or her food and board. But incarceration has not detered others from committing crimes.

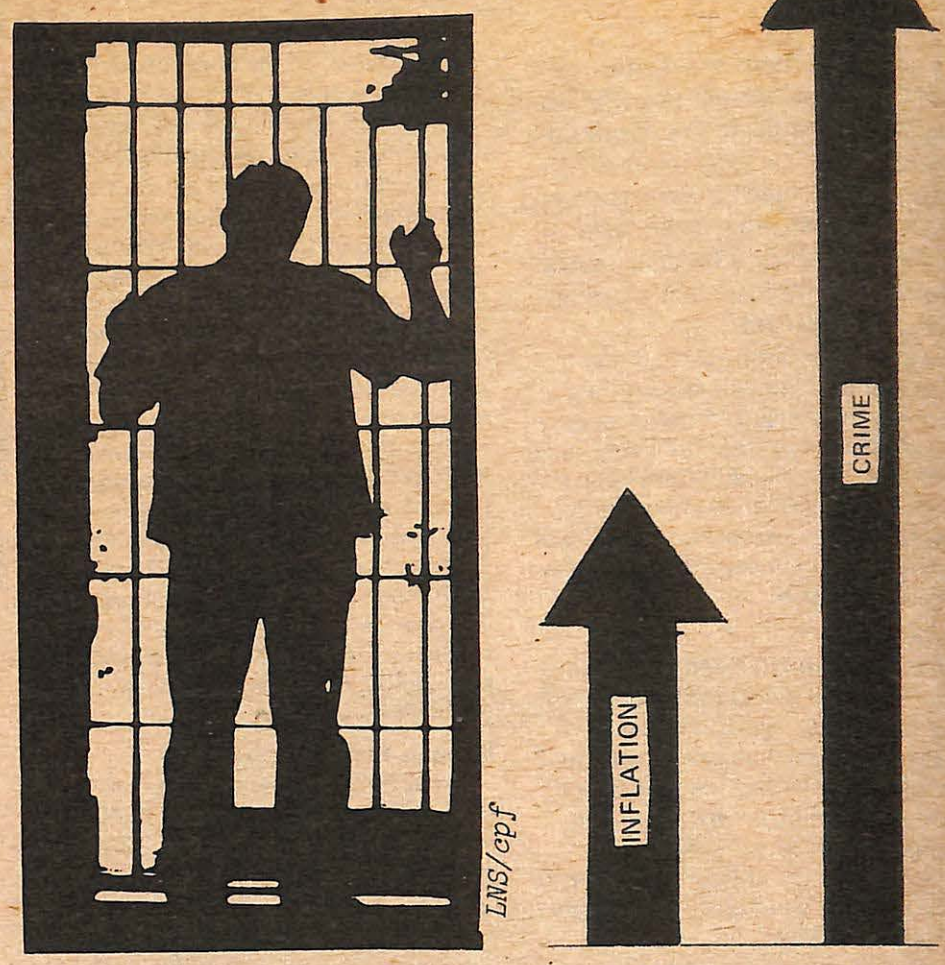
The long term real solution to the problem of crime is the transformation of our society into one that:

1)meets the real needs of people by providing dignified, well-paid work, and providing decent personal and health care.

2)does not profit from creating false needs for expensive products, or perpetuating the notion that happiness is a commodity available at a price.

Until our society becomes one that is responsive to human needs thereby eliminating the causes of crime, make use of short term solutions. All solutions that are available involve people joining together to protect each other. For instance, Block Associations, Neighborhood patrols and apartment protective associations should be formed. The purpose of these groups should be protective defense not antagonistic offense.

The answer to the problem of crime lies in a new society. For now we must watch out for one another and take preventive measures.



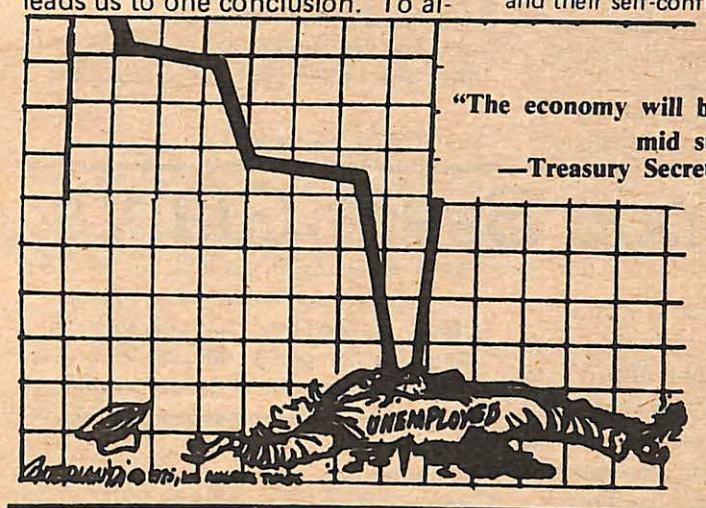
money talks

Vicious Unemployment Wastes U.S. Wealth

by Rick Wolff
Modern Times Staff

No matter how you look at it, the problem of unemployment leads us to one conclusion. To allow millions of workers to be denied jobs is a fantastic waste for everyone.

For the laid-off workers, unemployment wastes their time, their training, their skills. It hurts their self-respect and their self-confidence, which can only lower their productivity even when they get back to work.



"The economy will bottom out by mid summer."
—Treasury Secretary Simon

For the workers' children, it means going without all kinds of things, including education, training , etc. This wastes their chances to become productive members of the community. The children have to live in families with much greater nervous and emotional tensions when mother or father are unemployed. The results of such tensions are often tragic.

Increased Crime

For workers who have managed to hold on to their jobs, unemployment produces waste in the form of increased crime, vandalism, etc. Often taxes have to be raised to help unemployed people who would much rather have jobs. Many still working soon develop fears for their jobs, which adds to tensions in their homes, and so on.

For businesses, unemployment means idle machines, empty or only partly used factories and office spaces. The waste of unemployed people is matched by the waste of unused tools, equipment, buildings.

For everyone, unemployment is a huge waste simply because we all have that many fewer goods and services to buy and enjoy. Not only do we have less than we could have today, but the fact that fewer machines and factories are being built means we will have less goods and services in the future.

Part of Our System

Unemployment wastes people and resources, now and in the future. But unemployment has been and continues to be a feature of the economic system we live in, captialism or "free enterprise" or whatever you wish to call it. So if unemployment is wasteful, so is the system that burdens us with unemployment so regularly in our history.

When you think about it, the problem is not "reducing unemployment," but getting rid of it as a needless plague, a kind of social disease. We need a cure for this disease. What is to be done?

One idea, recently suggested by a group of union workers at the GM plant in Linden, New Jersey, is worth thinking about. They proposed to their union that instead of layoffs where people lose their jobs depending on how long they worked at the plant (the "seniority system"), the workers instead should all share the jobs that were still available. Instead of some working full-time (and sometimes even over-time), while others worked no-time, everyone would work part-time. Hard times would be shared equally.

Help Build Solidarity

This idea would go a long way toward producing some very good and important results. First, workers' security would be strengthened because even in hard times, nobody would ever get into really desperate shape. Second, it would do wonders in building real solidarity and real integration among working people. This is because of the fact that very often, minority groups, women and teenagers have the least seniority and are thus the first to be laid off. Sharing unemployment would demonstrate a real commitment of workers to one another. And so it would mark a giant step in the direction of greater worker solidarity.

Now, many will think that this amounts to a "share the poverty" idea. Wouldn't it be better to prevent the corporations from laying off workers in the first place? Yes, it would, but where will the power come from that would be needed to stop the corporations?

The answer is, and can only be, the power lied with the employees of the corporations. The trick is to come up with actions and goals that can unite working people and, at the same time, direct their unity toward the fundamental solution, the basic cure for the social disease of unemployment. Sharing unemployment is a goal, a plan, that both helps unemployed people today and unifies all workers for the difficult effort to change the basic ways corporations work, to change the system.

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MODERN TIMES

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MODERN TIMES is published by the American Independent Movement (AIM) as its political organ. Work on **MODERN TIMES** is done by volunteers, both members and non-members of AIM. The political views of AIM are given in the editorial. We encourage contributions from the New Haven community in the form of articles and letters.

MODERN TIMES is a paper to tell the story of and by the people of New Haven. We don't get this kind of news from profit-making commercial papers. There is no place else in New Haven where the problems of working men and women are told by them instead of their bosses. There is no place else where the problems of employment and education, and housing and health care are told by the people who have to live with them.

This is the richest country in the world. Yet most of the wealth is used only by a few. We must all work together to claim the wealth we all helped to create. There would be no need to strike for paltry raises, waste our resources and labor on missiles and bombs, or waste the lives of our young men in wars like Vietnam. We would produce what we need, not what is profitable.

The American Independent Movement has been working since 1966 to get people together against the vested interests that run New Haven and the whole country. We want everyone to have good housing, good education, child care centers, recreation areas, decent health care, and decent jobs.

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brass tacks

Ford Drives Us Down Road of Ruin

by Mike F. Holodnak
Modern Times Staff

Way before the rich were donating money to CREEP (Committee to Re-elect the President) in wheelbarrowsfull, many of us were showing photos of Nixon, and asking, "Would you buy a used car from this man?" As it turned out, just before Nixon was thrown out of office, he sold us a used Ford.

The fact that Gerald Ford was used would not have been so bad as such. But his past 25-year anti-union, anti-people and pro-corporation record in the Congress was proof from the very beginning that Ford was a lemon.

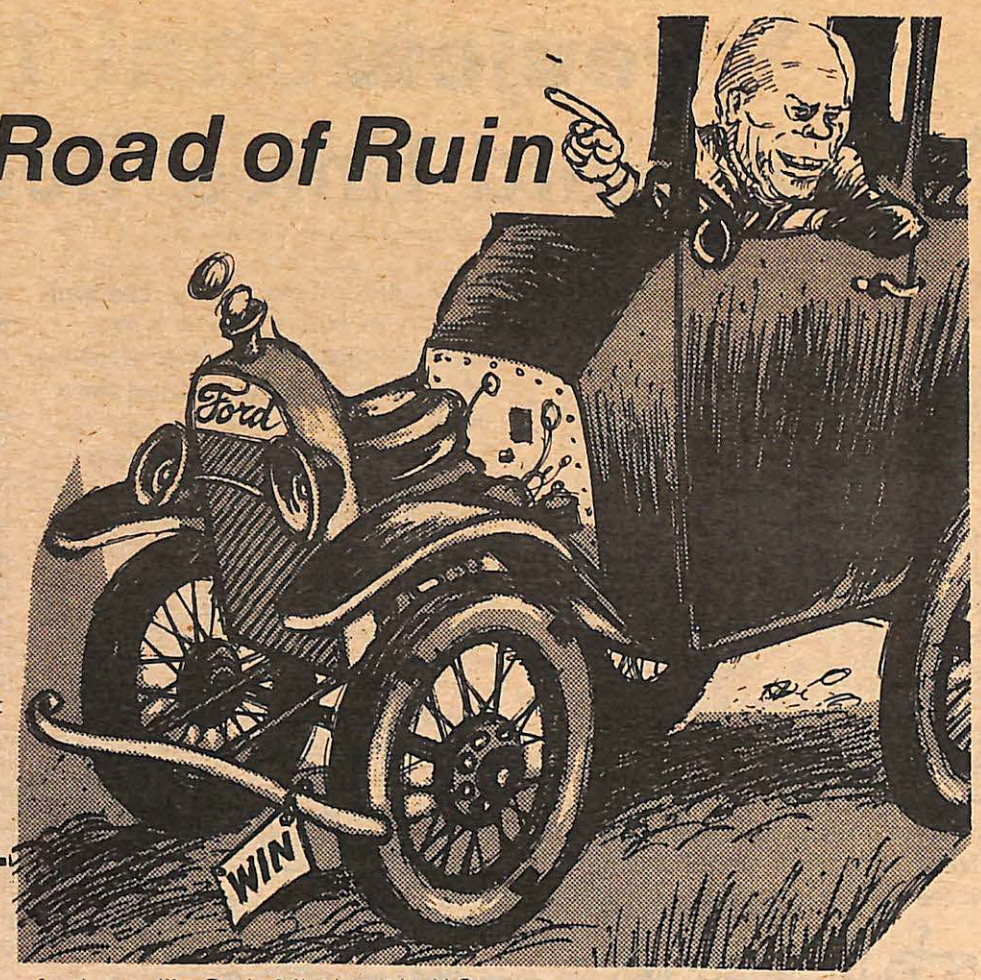
Expensive Side

So now we're forced to drive down the highway of life in a lemon, and the expense is terrific, especially for the poor. The sloppy cylinder rings are leaking oil like a sieve, which makes the oil companies happy.

Since only a third of our gasoline comes from imported oil a 5.4 cents per gallon increase would have taken care of the 16.2 cents per gallon increase in imported oil. But instead, the price went up 20 cents, an additional 15 cents a gallon profit for the oil monopolies. To top it off, last month the Ford administration said it was keeping oil prices high.

Rich get Richer

On March 5, Rockefeller's right hand man, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, told Congress that the United States might need to be a "military force" against the oil states unless it develops independent energy supplies. In short, it means that, while many Americans are eating dog food, guys like Rockefeller have the U.S. government and its military might ready to guarantee that their skyrocketing profits will continue.



To further insure that the rich will continue to get richer while the poor continue to bite the bullet, Treasury Secretary Simple Simon feels tax rebates should be concentrated on the middle and upper income Americans rather than the poor. Simon said the wealthier will use the money to buy cars, television sets, washing machines, refrigerators, and other items that will stimulate the economy.

The poor, he said, would spend their rebate on "non-durable" goods, meaning of course, things like food and clothing. At the same time, President Ford was trying hard as hell to increase the price of food stamps, obviously because this kind of increase would not create any kind of hardships for the rich.

Rebate a Minimum

We see President Ford on the boob tube trying to convince us what a nice guy he was because he was going to put money in people's pockets with a tax rebate to stimulate the economy. This would amount to around $100 per person and was tax money that had already been collected, mostly from workers. They would not have had to pay it out in the first place if workers had been earning a decent wage and the corporations were paying out their fair share of taxes.

In 1947 it took a worker 3 hours and 23 minutes of work to produce as much as he got paid in wages and fringes, the rest of the 8-hour day went to the companies. In 1969 it took 2 hours and 36 minutes. That means the corporations had stolen an additional 47 minutes from every single worker every day by job overloading, speedup and job combinations. Just to get back that 47 minutes would take at least a 30% wage increase.

Monopoly Crime

The Federal Trade Commission said that monopoly price-rigging costs U.S. consumers $15 billion a year. Although this gigantic looting of the public is illegal, neither the CIA, the FBI, or the Department of Justice will do anything about crimes committed by the rich and powerful. This can only be done by a united public.

Last week, in Salt Lake City angry farmers gave away 70,000 pounds of potatoes, saying they'd rather give them to the poor than sell them to supermarkets for a penny a pound. Del Ray Horn, of Robert Idaho, said growers were dumping 2 million pounds of potatoes a day because they can't sell them. "We feel that the supermarkets selling potatoes for 20-25 cents a pound are just getting too much in view of the fact that we're only getting a penny a pound," said Holm.

Farmers Pay the Price

"The other thing is that the Secretary of Agriculture told us to grow all the food we could to feed the starving world. We've got a two billion ton surplus here and we've asked President Ford to include dehydrated potatoes in the Food for Peace program, but he's turned a deaf ear to our request."

Holm added that if retailers don't lower their prices soon, "we'll bring 50 truckloads of spuds in here and give them away." Although farmers and workers are the ones who make the economy run, they don't control it. It's about time we traded in the delapidated Ford administration for something better. In the meantime we would do well if unions and consumers put pressure on Congress to demand:

1) Roll back of all prices.
2) Jobs for all at union conditions.
3) Shorter work-day with no cut in pay.
4) Slash the military budget.

United Way Staff Helps Workers Get Their Due

by Henry Tamarin

A unique series of classes is ending for another year at the Community Services Building at 1 State Street. The sessions are designed to inform members of area unions of the existing community and government services that are available. Sponsored by the Greater New Haven Central Labor Council and the United Way, they are organized by Frank Fallon and Lou Oronzo, the labor council's representatives on the United Way staff.

Each agency presents its own class, which is followed by a question and answer session. The average class attendance is well over 50. The eight Tuesday night sessions include Social Security, Medicare, Workmen's Compensation, Food Stamps, Unemployment Compensation, Family Counseling, State and City Welfare, and others.

Serves Workers' Interests

"The real strength comes out of the Labor Council, not me or Lou," said Frank Fallon, about their ability to put together this course and act as liasons with the labor movement. "Hopefully," added Lou, "the students will go back to their own members and pass this along, or become the nucleus of a relief committee in case of a plant shutdown, lock-out or some other severe dislocation."

Many Union Officers Involved

More than sixteen different locals from over a dozen different unions are represented at the course. Many of the people are officers or stewards in their unions, and feel a strong responsibility to learn as much as possible. Many of them are extremely sharp and put the agency personnel through their paces in an effort to extract useful information . Said one member from the Machinists Local 707, "it's getting so they jump you in the men's room to ask you questions about different services once they find out where I go every Tuesday night."

The classes have been held annually since the late 1950's. Lou Oronzo, a charter member and first chief steward of Lodge 609 at Olin, came to United Way in 1966. Frank Fallon helped organize the Teamsters at the old McKesson Robbins Co., and has been with the United Way since 1953. Both feel that the United Way has a responsibility to the working man and woman and that their jobs are to make sure the services are delivered to their constituency.

Those interested in the classes or in more information should call 772-2010.

Henry Tamarin

Lou Oronzo and Frank Fallon of United Way teach union members how to get the benefits they are entitled to. There is a pamphlet available on this subject - see COMMUNITY NOTES.

'74 Saw Strike Wave

From Community Press Features

Workers in U.S. started 5900 strikes in 1974—the largest number the Bureau of Labor Statistics has ever recorded. Some 2.7 million people participated in the strikes, considerably less than the record 1.16 billion of 1946, but the most since 1971.

Declining real wages, due to inflation, resulted in numerous strikes taking place soon after the wage-price controls were lifted on April 30, 1974. Most of the 5900 strikes took place after that date. Wage-price controls were first imposed in August 1971. Labor unrest had been on the rise in 1970 and the first half of 1971 because real wages had not been rising as fast as prices. Once the wage ceiling was lifted in 1974, many workers, especially those in smaller industries, hit the picket line.

1974's largest strike was of bituminous coal miners. It lasted for three weeks in November and December, included 120,000 workers, and totaled 2,040,000 unworked days.

Contracts covering 10.2 million workers were signed in 1974, and 869,000 workers won wage escalator clauses. The wage increase averaged 9.8% in the first year and 7.3% annually over the life of the contract. Compared to 1974's 12% inflation, workers are still left with a net loss in purchasing power.

review

"Hard Times" Recalls Depression Woes

by Karen Rosenberg
Modern Times Staff

HARD TIMES. An Oral History of the Great Depression edited by Studs Terkel. Avon, 533 pages, $2.75.

There is an old antedote about four blind men examining an elephant. The one who holds its leg thinks he has found a tree, the one who caught its tail thinks it is a snake, and so on. Studs Terkel, in his **Hard Times** uses the great depression as his elephant. He has collected statements by a wide range of Americans who lived this era and who disagree on its nature and causes. People who made their fortunes in the depression speak, as well as those who lost everything. The multiplicity of points of view is so overwhelming that many readers may be confused when they finish the book.

But bewilderment is not necessarily a bad thing. History is often fed to us in pre-packaged form, as if the truth were easily apparent. Studs Terkel, by subtly presenting his opinion about the depression, forces the reader to become a historian, to make sense out of a wealth of information.

Many People Felt Guilty

By noticing certain repeated phrases, we begin to form a conception of the era. We find that a great many people felt guilty for not working, as if they themselves were to blame for their unemployment. But we also see that numerous others understood that the fault was in the system, not in each individual. And quite a few worked to create a better society which would not produce massive joblessness and homelessness. The Works Progress Administartion, the strikes of the UAW and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the Catholic *W* orker, and the various other attempts to transform America appear, despite their differences, as a wide-spread committment to social change. Terkel exposes both the private agony and the public action in short interviews.

He includes a number of statements evaluating the extent and the limits of the changes brought by the New Deal. From his interviews with working people, government officials, labor organizations, businessmen, farmers, and students, the reader can get some sense of how and where the society was moving at that period.

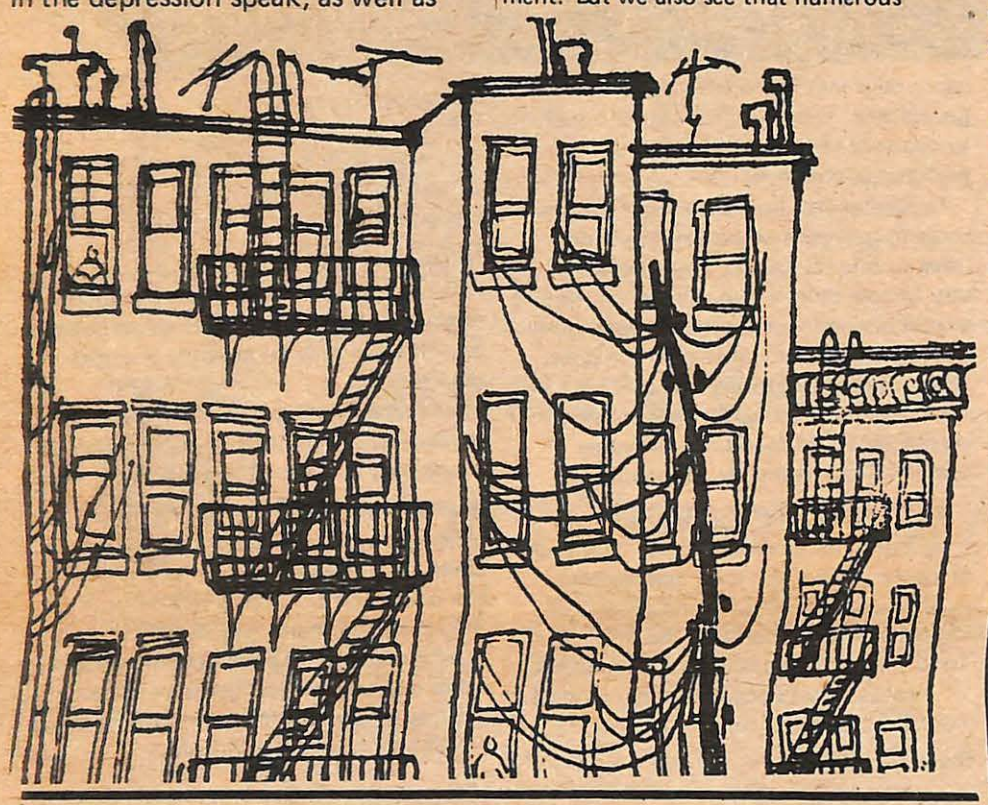
However, the editing of the book is rather slipshod. Sometimes background information is given while at other times, and for no obvious reasons, Terkel assumes the reader knows who's who and what's what. An index would have been helpful but none is provided. In short, it is possible but not easy to reconstruct the New Deal from **Hard Times.**

Much is Left Out

In addition, the reader should be aware of how much Terkel has left out. Most of the political factions which grew up in the thirties are not represented here; all ethnic groups do not have their say. It is important to remind the reader of these omissions because Terkel seems to be all-inclusive. But his book, while wide-ranging, is of course, not complete.

It would be unfortunate if someone did not finish or even begin **Hard Times** because it seemed too long and lacked focus. Scattered in these pages are significant personal confessions. One former Senator says that his boss told him how to vote. One former Congressman states that "We have two Governments in Washington: one run by the elcted people—which is a minor part—and one run by the monied interests, which control everything."

It may be necessary to read many pages to find genuine insights, they are there however. One can start in the middle or at the end and read selectively. **Hard Times** is a jigsaw puzzel; you can examine each of its parts or try to fit them all together in a whole.



Community Notes

A pamphlet for unemployed people, setting forth benefits available and courses of action, has been prepared by the United Way's Community Services Committee in cooperation with the New Haven Central *Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Subjects include eligibility criteria for unemployment insurance,* public welfare, food stamps, medical assistance (title XIX), Soldier's, Sailor's and Marine Fund, legal aid, supplemental security income, family and individual counseling and more. Copies are available from United Way, One State Street, 772-2010.

Big Brothers of New Haven, need men(over 18) to voluneter as Big Brothers. You can make the difference in a boy's life. Write Big Brothers c/o Richard Armstrong, 1 Pine St., New Haven 06513.

High School in the Community's Gardening Class is planting a garden near the school at 45 Nash St. Fertilizer and tools are needed. If you can lend or donate materials, call Tony at 624-1357. Help our Victory Garden grow!!!

How to Collect Comp.

by Modern Times Staff

If you are out of work or working less than full time, you may be eligible to collect unemployment compensation. In order to do so, you must file a claim at the local office by Friday of the first week for which you wish to collect.

It is best to come in on a Thursday or Friday, when the lines are shorter. Although eventually you will need a blue slip from your employer and a registration card from the employment office, you don't need either one to open a claim.

In Connecticut, the amount of money you receive per week (your "rate") is based on your reported earnings in the first four of the preceeding five quarters. If you first come in during the months of April, May or June, for example, your rate would be based on your earnings for all of 1974.

How Rate is Calculated?

The rate is derived entirely from your highest quarter of earnings in this period. It is equal to one half of your average weekly pay before taxes, up to a maximum rate of $104. If, for example, your highest quarterly earnings averaged $140 per week, you would receive $70 (tax-free) for each week of total unemployment.

A second requirement is that you have earned a four-quarter total of forty times your weekly rate, or the equivalent of twenty weeks of high quarter wages. In the example already used of $140 per week, you would need in 1974 total wages of $2800.

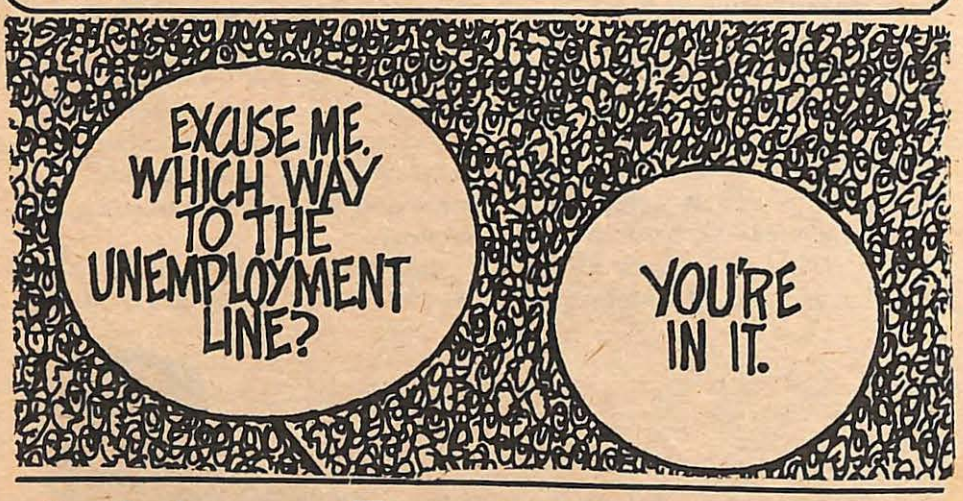
Assuming you have sufficient funds in the right time period, you may be interveiwed to decide when you can begin collecting. If you are a student with any daytime classes, you will probably be ineligible. If you are a mother with pre-school children, you will have to provide the name of someone or some place that could care for the child, if you were to get a daytime job. If you are collecting Social Security, you must not be limiting yourself to part-time work so as to keep below the social security maximum. In short, you must be available and looking for **full-time day work.**

Do Not Wait to Apply

If you quit or were fired from your last job for other than "lack of work" (e.g. for absenteeism or other "willful misconduct") you will probably not be able to collect for the four weeks following the last weeks you worked. If you quit a public school teaching job or substituted for less than forty days in one semester, your earnings will not ever be counted toward unemployment.

If you think you may be eligible, it is worthwhile applying. New programs are involving workers who have never been covered before, such as domestic and farm workers. These programs look at different categories of wages, although none go back more than the past two years earnings.

Do not wait for the blue slip. Come in within the first week of total or partial unemployment to set up an initial claim, so that you don't lose the week. The "A" line which stretches to the door on Monday, is the first place to go. These days you meet everybody there.



Jobless Fund Assaulted

continued from page 3

then propose reductions in benefits on the grounds that too much has been paid out already.

Reduced Benefits

CBIA is calling for the restoration of the waiting week, which was eliminated in 1967. This would mean that laid-off workers would have to wait three weeks until they received their first benefit check. In addition, CBIA is also asking for the disqualification of indiviuals who voluntarily quit their jobs or who get fired. Under current Conn. law these workers are already subjected to a four week penalty waiting period before they can collect.

Enactment of the CBIA bills would amount to a modern form of involuntary servitude. Workers often have good reason for quitting a job; harassment by supervisory personnel, unsafe working conditions, shift re-scheduling which conflicts with family responsibilities, etc. Similarly, workers get fired all the time in non-union shops for standing up to their bosses. To take away the option of quitting a job by disqualifying the worker from UC benefits is simply a blatant attempt by business and industry to use the the state agencies to discipline their work froce. Ctay on the job or starve is CBIA's message to Connecticut workers.

Write or call your state representatives and senators and urge them to reject the CBIA bill (SB 720) and endorse the proposals of the Connecticut labor movement (HB 6790 and HB 6799).

Plant Closings Gut Industry

Nick Heyer

Federal Paper Board abandons Fair Haven.

by Modern Times Staff

Editors' Note: This is the first article in a series which examines plant shutdowns and the dilemma they pose for workers.

In the last year workers in New Haven and the State of Connecticut have suffered from an unprecedented number of plant shutdowns. Closures at Federal Paper Board, United Nuclear, the Midtown Motor Inn, just to name a few, are in the works or have already happened.

Over the last five years in the Greater New Haven and surrounding areas, shutdowns have hit carpet manufacturers, wire facilities, the flatwear industy in Meriden, Royal Typewriter in Hartford, Uniroyal in Waterbury and Naugatuck, hat factories, stone quarries. No area of industry has been spared.

Permanent Danger

Some people think shutdowns occur when economic conditions are on the downswing. The reality of the situation is that boom or bust, shutdowns are with us day in and day out. We examined the shutdown activity of plants in the rubber and plastics manufacturing industry in Connecticut during the period 1957 through 1970, and found that at least 145 plants of all sizes in the State had closed their doors.

By contrast, 325 new plants opened up for business, an impressive figure, but one which indicates that even though the industry was booming, numerous plants closed and thousands of men and women were forced out of jobs.

Thus, although a case might be made that shutdowns occur more often in bad times than in good times, no period of time seems to be immune to the usually devastating shutdown.

Shutdowns Harmful

Many studies have overwhelmingly shown that workers suffer when their places of work close up. In general, affected men and women have long periods of unemployment after a shutdown, lower wages when they do find work, and inability to find steady work.

Black and other minority group workers have it harder than others; but, the older worker has it hardest, losing years of seniority and benefits, with only an occasional severance payment given by some firms.

Family troubles are also common for the "displaced worker," and the way of life a worker may have enjoyed is often abruptly changed or lost. Some studies have even shown that workers lose their health when a factory terminates its operations.

Workers Lack Protection

As if these dreary things are not enough, workers have virtually no protection--either through their unions (if they have one) or from government--in face of a plant shutdown. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in a series of reports, estimated that union contracts for bargaining units with at least 1000 workers contained very little which could materially help workers.

About 32 percent of the contracts they looked at allowed workers to transfer to the company's other plants; 30 percent had provisions for severance payments; 11 percent, relocation allowances; 10 percent, transfer of all or partial seniority; about four percent, advance notice of the closure; and only three percent allowed for the union to be notified or to be participants in managements' decisions to close their plants.

No Shutdown Laws

It is striking that no contract provision, or, for that matter, no law on the books requires that a compnay, along with its workers, prove the shutdown is necessary. But, the important things is that shutdowns rarely if ever benefit anyone but the owners and managers.

Despite the grim consequences so many workers suffer from shutdowns as well as the lack of protection most workers have when they happen, the labor movement should not be surprised that nothing has ever been done to stop shutdowns. The simple fact is that worker or even government involvement in deciding whether a plant should close up strikes at the very core of the economic philosophy dominant in corporate America: no one has the legal right to meddle in what a company wants to do with its productive facilities, whether or not it might mean extreme social hardship for its workers.

In other articles we shall report on examples of families trapped by shutdowns, why plants close, what attempts have been made to stem the tide of shutdowns, and what future possibilities there might be to prevent what for many is a tragic event.

Community Calendar

Sun. April 20 — **A training session for the People to People program** will be run from 6—9:30PM. The program is sponsored by Citizens for Better Correctional Institutions to provide inmates in Connecticuts Correctional Institutions with outside correspondents. Interested volunteers should call Pat Wallace at 562-8035.

Fri. April 25 — **A "Soup Line" to protest Ford's economic policies** will take place at Bienecky Plazza at 6:30 PM. President Ford will be speaking at Yale !

Sat. April 26 — **Peoples Bicentenial Powder House Day** will draw connections between "Powder to the People" and "Power to the People" in a skit exploring UI's financial backing and power in New Haven. There will also be the Peoples Marching Band and Chorus. 3PM at the New Haven Green. At 8PM there will be a Powder Party at the Peoples Center, 37 Howe St.

Every Week — **At the Women's Center.** Sundays at 2:30 Divorce and Seperation Rap Groups; Mondays at 5:30 Women's Self Defense and at 8:00 Lesbian Rap Group; Tuesdays at 8:00 Open Rap Group; Thursdays at 8:00 Women vs. Conn. and Abortion Referral Project Groups; Fridays from 3:30-5:30 Walk-In Counseling Service for Women. Visit or call the Women's Center, 415 Park St. 436-0272.

Get Free Food Stamps

by Ed Breuler
Modern Times Staff

In these times of high prices for consumer goods an alternative that an average household has to insure a healthy, stable diet is the use of the Food Stamp Program. Every American should be able to have a fair share of America's plentiful foods in order to be well-fed, alert and healthy.

The Food Stamp Program enables low-income households to buy more food of greater variety to improve their diets. But in these hard times, the households that are now participating in the program are not only the low-income but middle-income, student collectives and elderly people.

Increased Food Budget

Participation in the program will provide households with a greater quantity of healthful foods and stretch food budgets. The average increase in purchasing power is about 45 to 50 percent.

It used to be true that participation in this program was small because it was considered demeaning. Not so now, say the latest statistics from Hartford. In February 1975, there were 4,831 households containing 14,000 residents in the New Haven area using food stamps, as compared to 4,400 households of 13,000 in January 1975. In February 1974, there were 2,900 households of 8,000 people.

Who Is Eligible?

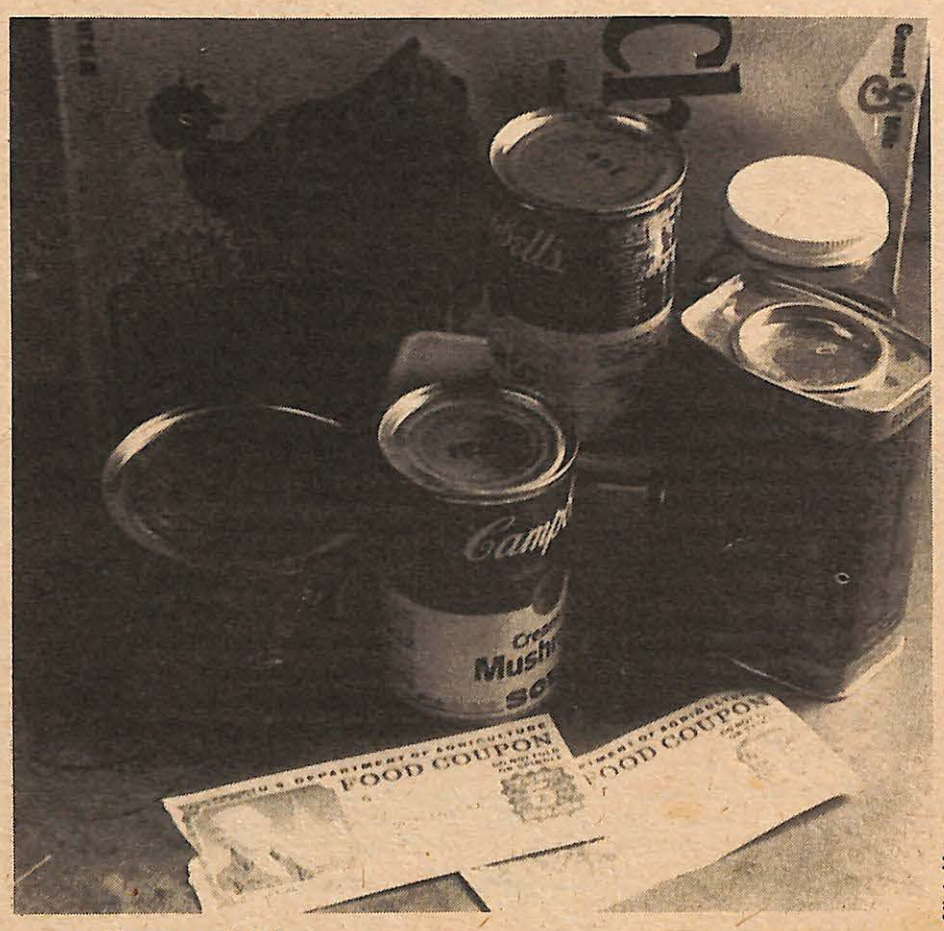
Any single person or family household which meets nationwide standards for income and resources, and lives as one economic unit cooking and eating meals at home qualify for food stamps. Income is defined as any money received by any and all members of the household. This includes wages, public assistance, workmen's compensation, unemployment compensation or strike benefits.

Expenses deducted from income include such mandatory expenditures such as state, local and federal taxes; social security taxes under FICA; retirement, union dues and work allowance. Other deductions are medical costs, child care for employment, training and education, tuition and school fees, rent, utilities and alimony payments.

Worth the Hassle

These are deducted from the total income to get the adjusted net income; this is the figure used to determine the amount of food stamps a household may get. A household of people with an income of $245 would pay $65 to get $154 worth of stamps.

The Food Stamp Program, like any other state program, often involves a dehumanizing process and run-around, but the benefits are worth it. You can double your purchasing power with regular use of this program. It is a simple way to add needed dollars to family income and to help the need for a nutritionally adequate diet that will benefit every person in the household.



Nick Heyer

Food Stamps can help!

on t'e rip-off job

How Oral Contracts Vanish in Air

by Ann Kilbride
Modern Times Staff

As we all learn in elementary U.S. history courses, the traditional American ideal is: free enterprise. According to this system, the small entrepreneur will suceed through hard work, creativity and guts. But, this theory put into practice usually spells "rip-off." Free-lance, non-union workers are, more often than not, victims of their employers.

In one recent case, Gary Borgnis and Rodney Bogner discivered that a spoken contract is worth less than a two-cent postage stamp. These two artists were hired to paint a sign for Michael's Tailors and Hamden Hearing Aide Center. They submitted designs, obtained paint supplies and received specific instructions.

Refused Payments.

Once the sign was painted and properly hung, however, the employers refused to pay the one hundred dollar fee. Although this sign has not been removed, the owners insist that it failed to meet thier needs. When questioned about their objections, they replied, We're not artists, therefore, we misunderstood the original sketches. We will not pay anymore than $50 for a sign we don't like."

In a similar "rip-off" vein, there was the case of Jay Gitlin versus the Yale Rep. Theater. Jay, a competent composer and musician, was hired a musical director for the Rep.'s production of **Watergate Follies.** As musical director, Jay organized, wrote and coordinated the musical numbers. For one month, he worked nine to twelve hours a day rehearsing with the cast.

Opening Night Blues

On opening night Jay had to leave for New Orleans, therefore, he obtained the director's permission and hired his own replacement. Upon returning two days later later, Jay was rebuked by Mr. Brustein and was warned not to miss further performances. Then, three days later, Jay received a dismissal notice and a $50 check. His work was confiscated; his name was left on the program; but he did not receive the $600 which the Yale Rep. had verbally promised.

A third, slightly different case, concerns a title-searcher (anonymously named Joe), who has spent 25 years working for Clark Hall and Peck. Several years ago Joe considered accepting a job with the state. Since Clark Hall and Peck needed his services, it offered him a large raise plus a cost-of-living adjustment. But inflation ran rampart and the firm refused to pay the salary increase. Then, as times grew harder, the company reduced Joe's work week to four days and introduced a 20-40% decrease in pay.

Little Defense

To make ends meet, Joe accepted part-time title searching work on his day off. Upon discovering his actions, his company accused him of "stealing business." Consequebtly, Joe was placed back on five days with a salary decrease. Because he is nearing retirement age and has financial obligations, Joe can not aviod this abuse and humiliation. Because his contract was verbal not written he can not take legal action.

In all three of these cases, the workers were denied what they had been verbally promised. Until employers begin to honor the spoken word, workers have only one recourse. Get the contract in writing! A written contract may not guarantee payment but it would make an employer think twice about withholding funds. Besides, a written contract holds a lot more weight in the courtroom.

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Allende Speaks at CIA Confab.

Nick Heyer

Micheal Harrington gave the opening speech at the National Conference on the CIA vs. World Peace at Yale on April 5. The conference was attended by over 1200 persons and all workshops were overflowing. Mrs. Allende addressed the conference in an evening session. Many aspects of the CIA's role in world unrest were explored throughout the day.

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